
Secondment Policy

Introduction

1. As an employer we are committed to facilitating the development of our staff and this is evidenced by our recognition under Investors in People and through the application of our training and development policy and staff appraisal system.
2. Secondments fit well with our training and development practices and as an employer we are supportive of them as a career development tool. However, given that we have to maintain our operational effectiveness, we need to take into account the reasons for each secondment and the impact that it will have upon the Council. Our ability to manage, afford and cover each secondment must be weighed against the benefits it will confer. This policy is provided to give guidance to staff and managers on aspects of our approach to secondments.
3. Whilst there are many reasons why staff secondments are of importance the main reasons we recognise are:
 - development for the individual;
 - adding to the skills base of the organisation;
 - an additional means of career development;
 - an opportunity to build or develop further strong relationships with other organisations; and
 - an opportunity to deal with short term staffing or workload levels.

Types of secondment

4. Secondments vary in type and nature. Our aim is to ensure that a fair and consistent approach is used for all secondment arrangements across the Council which is why all cases must be considered by senior management in conjunction with Human Resources.
5. External secondments are where a member of staff temporarily transfers from one organisation to another with the aim of developing their skills and knowledge for the benefit of all concerned. Secondments can also confer a better understanding and enhance working relationships between organisations and this is of particular importance where we need to enhance our understanding of our stakeholders (and vice versa) and this expertise can be brought back to the Council.
6. Inward secondments are where a member of staff from an external organisation joins us to temporarily cover either an established post or temporary vacancy. The latter category will occasionally be used where specific skills and knowledge that are not readily available within the Council are brought in or the aim is to further develop

partnership working with our stakeholder bodies.

7. Internal secondments are where an existing member of staff transfers on a temporary basis to another branch or directorate within the Council to broaden their experience or further develop existing skills to take on the full duties of another post. For internal secondments lasting beyond three months we will generally advertise them within the Council so existing members of staff may apply, unless there are specific business reasons to do otherwise. One example is where we have surplus staff available and in such cases the Council reserves the right to temporarily redeploy staff to suitable alternative work to avoid potential redundancies.
8. With this in mind we are in principle supportive of staff secondments to other organisations where they confer benefit both for the Council and the secondee. Ultimately the final decision on whether a secondment can be supported will depend upon the circumstances of each case, the views of the relevant line management (normally at Deputy or Director level) combined with input from Human Resources.

Notification of secondments

9. External secondment opportunities normally arise where our employees directly apply to advertised vacancies or, where a potential secondment opportunity is brought to our attention by a stakeholder body and we are then able to circulate it to our staff in order that they can apply. Occasionally external secondment opportunities arise as a spin-off from an area of work being undertaken in the Council or as a direct result of our staff/line managers' contact with stakeholders.
10. It may be that individual staff or managers are able to actively identifying external secondment opportunities with stakeholders where there is mutual benefit. This may typically happen where there is some degree of spin-off generated by an area of Council work that an individual member of staff is involved with and has specific knowledge and skills that will enable the project to continue. Where this happens the external secondment opportunity will not be opened up, although any measures to backfill the vacancy it creates where it is more than three months will normally be subject to a competitive recruitment process.

Duration and nature of secondments

11. The duration of secondments vary depending upon the nature of the post. As a general rule we would set an upper limit of two years for any secondment.
12. Short periods of secondment can sometimes prove harder to support unless we are able to gap or backfill the vacated post in a flexible way. However, we will consider each case on its merits.
13. Whilst most secondments tend to be for full time posts sometimes the receiving organisation may offer a part-time secondment. As an organisation we will try our best to facilitate secondments based upon circumstances and it should be noted that sometimes our strategy to backfill a post may offer up part-time or job-share career

development opportunities for existing staff within the Council.

Terms and conditions for secondees

14. As a general rule as an employee of the Council you will remain our employee whilst on secondment and retain the same terms and conditions of employment. There may be some minor changes to conditions based upon specific circumstances that are in force at the receiving organisation. For example they may take different public holidays from the Council or use a different working pattern. Where such variations are required we will draw them to the attention of the secondee before the secondment commences based upon the information from the external organisation.
15. Any queries about these should be raised through Human Resources.

Return to the Council

16. For short term secondments of less than six months we would normally expect secondees to return to the post they vacated unless for business reasons this is not possible. For longer secondments, (depending upon how the post is backfilled), we will include a statement in letters of secondment regarding what will happen on return as it is difficult to predict the impact of organisational change on the post over the secondment period. This will normally state that whilst it is our expectation that they return to the post they had vacated there may be reasons why this is not possible. Under such circumstances we will work with the outward secondee to identify an alternative post within the Council.

Points to consider for staff

17. Please remember that as an individual member of staff you have a key role to play in your own development, supported as necessary by the Council and your line manager.
18. If you wish to explore the possibility of a secondment please discuss it with your line manager, this can be done through the appraisal process or separately from it. Human Resources can give guidance on secondments and the potential impact, if any, upon your terms and conditions of service.
19. If you are considering applying for a secondment we ask that you advise your line manager and Human Resources at the earliest opportunity. This will permit early consideration of your case should the application be successful.

Points to consider for line managers

20. Through staff appraisal and normal management contact talk with your staff to identify what their career aspirations are and provide balanced feedback on areas for development taking account of the different options available to try and meet them.
21. Where secondments are being contemplated you will need to consider what:

-
- benefits will the secondment confer for the Council and for the individual;
 - how would you propose to backfill/cover the seconded post;
 - what impact will this have upon your ability to meet operational requirements; and
 - in the case of an inward secondment is it the best way to temporarily cover a post or does the Council already have staff with existing skills?

Further advice

22. You can obtain further advice on secondments and other strategies to support career development from Human Resources.
23. Other SFC policies and procedures particularly relevant in this area are:

[Recruitment and Selection Procedure](#)

[Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

Document history

This Policy and Procedure does not form part of SFC's terms and conditions of employment.

Owner: Human Resources

Version number	Changes	Date approved
1.1		01/08/2017 Ratified by JNCF

Review cycle: where there is a change in elements of the policy or periodically every two years.